

THE THOUSAND-DOLLAR BILL

A MYSTERY OF THE UNITED STATES TREASURY—A SHORT STORY

BY LEONARD OUTHAM

CHAPTER I.

They were out on the veranda in the cool of the evening, old Caleb Loring, in a rocking chair, smoking his pipe; Bertha, his daughter, swinging in a low hammock, and her husband, Edmund Hackett, who was perched upon the wooden balustrade.

"Uncle Sam," remarked Edmund Hackett, a quiet, steady going sort of fellow, well advanced toward middle life, "Uncle Sam is not generous to us boys and girls of the Civil service. We handle between eight upon a million dollars every working day, and give away lives to the mill horse business for a bare subsistence."

"Since I've been cashier of the Ranchers' National," said Wilton Loring, "I've had enough money pass through my hands to make me crazy with thirst for it. It's like being—"

"Don't like to hear you talk like that, Wilton, my son," remarked Old Caleb, with a quick shake of his head, as if a mosquito had settled on him. "Thoughts of that kind sometimes materialize into deeds you'd be sorry for."

"Humph! I'm not so sure I shan't one day try to pinch something," pursued Wilton, with a wink at his sister. "But big steals are the sort to succeed nowadays. To make a corner in something or other; to float a salted mine, or a bogus building society. That's the game."

"That, tall!" protested the elder Loring, with fierce expectation; but Bertha mischievously took up her brother's humor.

"There's a fine chance now I've got into the counting division at the Treasury," said she. "Say now, way not make up a family combination? You, Wilton, are cashier at the Ranchers; and you're constantly having old bills sent into the Treasury for redemption. You 'pinch,' as you call it, a thousand-dollar greenback, and forward the packet to the Treasury enclosed as containing one more bill than it actually does. That packet comes to me to be counted and examined. I just pass it as containing the number of greenbacks specified. So it goes to Edmund, my husband, whose duty it happens to be to check my count. Smart Edmund finds one bill short; but seeing his Bertha's initials on the wrapper, he just winks a winkle, and the packet, with my ninety-nine bills instead of one hundred bills against the new ones to that value which he sends back in exchange to the Ranchers' Bank through the Division of Leads. See?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Edmund Hackett, disposed to enter into any joke conceived by his adored little wife. "How we could bleed Uncle Sam and help ourselves to the salaries he ought to pay us."

"Have done! Have done!" burst out the old man. "If I believed my son and my daughter and my daughter's husband were capable of such roguery I'd fetch out my gun and fill you full of holes, every one!"

"He meant it. His usually placid features were distorted and purple with indignation, and the stem of the pipe he held snapped in the angry grip of his hand. Wilton flung himself back in a fit of hearty laughter, but Bertha, perceiving that the joke had gone too far.

"Father! dear father!" she exclaimed soothingly. "You know us all better than that, sure. We were just joking fun; weren't we, Edmund? Besides, such a combination as I figured out couldn't be anyway."

"Quite impossible!" averred Wilton, smiling over his mirth. "Well, I reckon it's improbable in the last degree," said Edmund Hackett. "So, an opportunity makes the thief, and we shall have an opportunity," added young Loring, "the whole three of us'll have to be honest, will we, or won't we?"

"You know, father," urged Bertha, to calm the old man, who multered and protested still, and seemed to have taken fright at the very thought of a breach of trust, "there are nine ladies in the Counting Division besides myself, and Wilton's imaginary short packet might go to any one of them instead of to me."

"And if Bertha did get it and pass it," remarked Hackett, to clinch the argument, "there are plenty of fellows in the Secretary's office who check the counts beside me, and one of them would catch my oversight. Even if the count passed me to you, it would be taken for me to wink for I should have cut-half the bills. They are cut logarithmically," he added for Wilton's information, turning to his brother-in-law. "One-half the lower section—comes to the Secretary, and the upper goes to the office of the Register, to be checked there."

"We should need another confederate in the Register's office," put in Bertha. "The steal would be caught to a certainty in the Register's office."

"Unless—by Cheery! we've the whole bag of tricks. The combination you figured out is not only possible, it is here in our hands. Dad is the Senior Counter in the Register Division. The big bills go to him. This is marvelous! It fortune is destined to do us a good

turn, here's the method all ready, cut and dried. I nobby a thousand-dollar bill at the bank, and send a packet of ninety-nine into the Treasury endorsed as 100. Bertha passes it through the Counting Division. Edmund gets the lower half in the Secretary's office, notes his wife's initials and swallows the shortage with connubial submission; and Mr. Loring, who spots the game in the Register's, out of respect for—"

"His trust, his country's confidence, the honor of his name," burst out the old man, "reports the matter instantly. Yes, gives the lot of you away, to ruin, to disgrace, to the hulks. No words about it! That's what I would do, mind that!"

Wilton laughed lightly. "The bundles of rubbish; ninety-nine or a hundred bills; what would it matter to Uncle Sam? And I should send each of you \$250. Think it over, dad."

"Think it over? I shall never forget this talk of yours, Wilton. A crime conceived is half executed. May I never hear more of this combination of yours, in joke or in fact, will be my prayer from this day to God in Heaven."

And shaking his head angrily, the father strode into the house.

CHAPTER II.

A few days after this conversation Bertha Hackett sat in the office of the Redemption Division assisting Mrs. Lawson, the senior lady of the department, to count a packet of "big bills." Greenbacks of large denomination were allotted to the senior lady in the ordinary course, and the juniors would take it in turn to work with her for the sake of becoming accustomed to every kind of note, and by such familiarity detecting any forgery that might fall into their hands. Bertha was serving her apprenticeship in this department, and that day she sat at Mrs. Lawson's desk to learn all that this good lady could teach her.

Now among the packets of old bills sent in from all parts of America to be canceled and exchanged for new currency, it was not unusual for the Ranchers' National Bank of Philadelphia, to contribute to its quota. Bertha's bright grey eyes took a sidelong glance at the heap of parcels before her companion, wondering whether chance would so far realize their fancied combination as to bring into her hands a consignment from her brother, Wilton. Like a pestilent tune that keeps echoing in the brain, that family talk of a conspiracy to defraud Uncle Sam could not be dismissed from her thoughts. These slips of dirty paper authorizing the payment to bearer of large sums of money, what a pity they should all go to the macerating machine to be ground into pulp! One more or less would make no difference to the wealthy nation, but would work wonders for an underpaid official who found it hard to make both ends meet. She told herself it was horribly wicked to think of misappropriation, but she could not control her thoughts and they pictured for her persistently the staff of the three departments reduced to herself, her father, and her husband, and figured out the fortune they might accumulate by the aid of slick fingers. While thus musing she was startled by a remark from Mrs. Lawson, as that lady placed before her a heap of thousand-dollar bills which she had been critically examining with a magnifying glass. "That's a big charge from the Ranchers' National—a hundred bills of a thousand each. I make them right; but you go over them again one by one, count them in two packets of fifty each, and bind them with a paper band in the usual way for me to initial and pass forward."

Mrs. Lawson proceeded with another packet, so absorbed in her work that she did not notice how strangely young Mrs. Hackett stared for a moment at the task before her. With the heap of bills lay the paper band that had enclosed them when they came from the Bank at Philadelphia. It was endorsed with the number and the denomination of the notes, and bore the signature, "Wilton Loring, Cashier." Mrs. Lawson vouched for them as correct, and turned Bertha's fingers trembled as she yetted them over. She counted half of them backward, from 100 to fifty, and made a packet of them, as instructed, and the other half she counted in the usual way, beginning one, two, three, four, and so on. When she came to the end of the count she paused, and counted this second half again backward. Then she slowly fastened a band around the packet.

"You're not very smart at present, my girl," remarked the elder lady, observing her sluggish action. "I have to hunt for counterfeits; but should never get through if I took so long as you have done with that simple cheque. But maybe you reckon to find, I've passed a wrong count?" she added, with a little touch of irony. "After thirty-four years at this work, my dear, the bills that have passed through Rosina Lawson's hands can be taken as right if she says so."

Mrs. Lawson was rather tetchy, and had a good conceit of herself, born of long infirmity. Bertha in silence wrote her own initials on the wrappers of the two packets, and this action tickled the senior lady, for by thus taking responsibility for the correctness of the packets, Mrs. Hackett seemed to convey an impression of confidence in her. But something else was in Bertha's mind, for she muttered to herself as the packets were taken away to the cutting machine to be further checked in the office of the Secretary of the Register. "There is just a chance!" (To be continued.)

THE ROPE WAS READY

BUT THE MAN WHO WAS TO BE HANGED ESCAPED.

And Will Soon Occupy a Seat in the United States Senate—Some Interesting Adventures in the Life of "Tom" Bard.

(Special Letter.)

Adventures have been numerous in the career of Thomas R. Bard, who has lately been elected United States senator from California. He was born in Chambersburg, Pa., studied law there, and from that place enlisted in the union army at the age of 21. At Antietam he and a comrade named Welch rode too far into the confederate lines and were captured. Bard and Welch were tied to trees, the rope was ready and arrangements were being made to hang them as spies, when the federal cavalry rushed that confederate outpost. Had the union soldiers come ten minutes later, Bard would never have been United States senator.

After the war Bard came under the eye of Col. Thomas A. Scott, later famous as the head of the Pennsylvania railroad system. Scott owned immense land interests in California, and he was so taken with Bard that he sent him to California in the winter of 1864-65, to take charge of his property there, which consisted of 277,000 acres of land in the counties of Ventura, Los Angeles and Humboldt. Young Bard needed a well-set chin and some peppery fighting blood, for there were not over a dozen Americans within a radius of ten miles of him at that time, and he had no end of trouble with the people who came in and squatted on Scott's land. One incident shows that he was quick and forceful in fighting.

W. E. Barnard had squatted and set up a business in lightering cargoes and selling merchandise at about the place where Bard owned a wharf. It was on the disputed portion of a rancho. Bard made up his mind to oust Barnard and his associates and set up a wharf for Scott at the point where they were in business. So one night he took a company of men and fenced in the property. Barnard mustered the squatters, the guns were polished up and the squatters laid siege to Bard and his men. Others rushed to Bard's rescue, and the squatters sent for reinforcements. Some shots were fired, but no one was killed, and in the end Bard won. Barnard was one of the first to send him congratulations on his election as senator, though he hotly talked of hanging in those harsh days of about 1871.

It began to be said of Bard that he was the very devil of a man with a horse, because he could drive any animal anywhere. Though having a fair seat in the saddle, it was as a reinsman that he made his fame. His habit was to drive four-in-hand, and to send the four on a run all the time. There was some method in this, as he had to carry large sums of money about, and it isn't an easy thing to hold up four bronchos on the run. But Bard would set his horses across country at this breakneck speed, careless as to roads and dangers.

One night in 1874 the expected happened. Bard was "held up." A man paid him \$10,000 at Pierson's old hotel, and Bard was to drive with this up to "No. 1," on the Ojai. He had forgotten his pistol, but Pierson handed him an ancient derringer, and off he started, likely-click. After a time, when on an up-grade, a man got ahead of the leaders and checked them. At the same time another came to the forward wheels and demanded Bard's money.

For answer Bard fired that derringer full at the highwayman, splintering the old weapon into bits but missing the man. The horses started to run, however, and the man at the bridle of the leaders got scared and let go, and off into the darkness plunged Bard with his sack of money and lame hand, where the derringer handle had split and hurt him. The marauders mounted the horses they had tethered near and made off at good speed. They were not captured.

The desperadoes all hated Bard and many times threats of killing him were made. He called his enemies cowards and once, when a man named Sprague drew a bead on him, he took the rifle away and broke it across his knee.

Before Col. Scott died he put all his great California properties in Bard's name. There was never a scratch of a pen to show that they were not Bard's property. After the colonel's death his heirs took it for granted that Bard, who had made money for himself as well as for Scott, really owned all the lands in California. They were much surprised when Bard carried them the information that he held property worth a million or two in trust with-out anything to show the trust.

He was made administrator of the



THOMAS H. BARD.

will annexed" of all of Scott's California properties. Judge Williams fixed the bond at \$1,140,000. Surety companies were not around the courts in those days eager to give bonds for a consideration, so Bard sent Capt. Merry among his Ventura neighbors to get sureties for the great amount.

"Only two men declined to go on the bond," said Capt. Merry. "We had it more than filled up in less than three days. That shows how the people trusted him."

Well, Bard cleaned up that vast property, greatly increasing its value and turned over to the heirs the holdings they did not know were theirs. This heavy financiering brought him in contact with many men of affairs and gave him standing among them as a clear-headed, hard-working man of his word.

WEAVING RAG CARPETS. Cheap Floor Coverings Have Almost Driven Out This Trade. The rag-carpet business is not what it used to be. Any one with an eye for carpets might infer so much from the abundance and the low prices of serviceable carpets not made of rags to be seen in the house-furnishing stores. Many of their experience in life today hardly know what a rag carpet is. For the information of such it may be as well to say that a rag carpet is a woven fabric in which the place of yarn is taken by narrow strips of rag sewn together. Any old rags will do for the purpose, though, to be sure, the material ought to be strong enough to stand some strain in the process of weaving and some hard wear after it has been woven. A veteran weaver of rags sits at his loom in an east side basement, and recalls the time when, thirty-three years ago, he came to New York from Bavaria and found more than 1,000 hand weavers of rag carpets here. "Some dead, some gone to different places or taken up other trades," he answers, if you ask him what has become of all these skilled artisans. "There was no work for them any more. If it was not for the hospitals and the old women's homes, I would not have enough work to make a living. There are not more than fifteen of us left in New York now, I only know of three, on the east side."

His allusion to the hospitals and homes is explained by the custom of employing old and feeble women, who are past almost all other kinds of work, to cut and sew together the strips of rags for making these carpets. These strips are brought to the weaver in large balls and are wound on the shuttles by means of an ancient spinning wheel. The carpets, once woven, make warm, noiseless, economical floor coverings in hospitals and such places. Given the balls of rags, all properly sewn, the weaver charges only about 30 cents a yard for making the carpet, and it is a yard wide. The work is harder, perhaps, than the weaving of threads, however thick, but to judge of the craftsmen by this one specimen they are a sturdy brotherhood. This one is about 60 years old, and, though under middle height, he looks as if he could easily put down the average wrestler of 25. In his own particular craft of wrestling with a substantial loom, his stint of work for an hour is not much under a yard, and he can weave from 6 o'clock in the morning to 8 in the evening, or longer, at a push.—New York Tribune.

Inventions Worth Millions. Here are a few cases where inventors have been struck by lightning. It is either money or glory for the successful inventor. Never both. Who knows what his name was that invented the can opener? His family only, and yet no household is without a can opener. He made about \$1,000,000 out of it. (Estimated. Maybe he didn't make so much.) Who was it that invented the return ball? While the patent lasted he drew about \$50,000 a year from it, and that is as good as being president of these United States—better, for he didn't have to look out for fourth-class postmasterships or worry about a renomination. Why children should want a return ball is a deep, unfathomable mystery, but they do. The rubber string fastened to the ball is forever breaking, and the child doesn't live that can tie it so that it will stay tied, but they will not consent to live without it. The Dancing Jim Crow" top paid its infamous author \$75,000 a year before it got to be an old story. Pharaoh's Serpents" made \$50,000 a year during its brief career, and John Gilpin" netted something like \$500,000 for its designer. Most people do not even know what these toys are, let alone the inventors' names.—Ainslie's Magazine.

The Scrap-Book Habit. Seldom does a day pass in a reading family without eliciting from somebody the remark apropos of a verse in the daily paper, or of a heroic act performed by some obscure and everyday man who simply does his duty without any fuss—"There, that is too good to lose. We must save it." If there is a young girl at hand, who keeps a scrap book, the clipping is straightway attached to a page and is then ready for future reference. Equally, an oblong book, filled with envelopes appropriately labeled, leads itself to the retaining and classifying of scraps, be they statistical, poetical, dramatic or amusing. The necessity is that some one shall attend to the little matter immediately, as it is one of those small affairs which slip from memory if postponed. A daughter can render her busy father a very welcome service by forming in herself, for his sake, the scrap-book habit.—Gollier's Weekly.

New York state has 120,000 more

whittling for fun. People who flock southward during the winter as a relief from the cares at home take on some new and strange occupations. At present the passion is for whittling, says the Washington Post. In fact, it is the amusement of the hour of the banker, the merchant and the tired-out millionaire. But it is not the same aimless chipping away of a stick that delights the schoolboy; very pretty things are made by these grave designers, paper cutters being one of the most general. After a number of men congregated at some resort have been attacked by the craze, it is amusing to see them starting out to find the wood. They go forth clad in knickerbockers and armed with great jack-knives, as serious as though in search of the buck of the season. More prized than any other are the woods of the laurel and rhododendron. Both are exquisitely white and receive as high and fine a polish as satin. Straight pieces of considerable length are chosen to be cut and it is desirable that they should terminate in a fork. The forked part is left undisturbed in its natural state for the handle, while the other end is whittled down into the blade of the cutter. Various are the ways of achieving this apparently simple end and every man finds contentment in the conviction that his own knife and tools are the best. The final polishing is universally done with sandpaper and a broken bit of glass. Knitting needles are also popular among the things that are being whittled. They are finished at the top with a round ball, which has carved upon it the initials of the one who is to be their possessor. The greatest achievement in whittling, however, is an endless chain that was recently done by quite an old gentleman who had gone to the south to rest. Wilton each link rested a little revolving ball. It was truly a chef d'oeuvre. Scientifically it is claimed that there is something about the mechanical calm of whittling which is most restful to an overtaxed mind.

DUEL OF CANNONS. Memorable Contest Between Field Pieces During the Crimean War. No duels have been arranged between the Long Tom of the Boers and any of the favorite guns of the British, but in the Crimean war was fought a duel between two pot pieces of artillery, which, considering all its phases, probably has not been paralleled in warfare. One day the Russians sent a message to the English at the time a flag of truce was flying. "Your 68-pounder gun," said the bearer, "which your people call Jenny, is a beautiful gun; but we have one as good. We should like to have a fair duel with her." The challenge was accepted, and everything arranged for 12 o'clock next day. When the time arrived all the batteries ceased firing, and the two armies looked on. "Our sailors' gun attachment," says Sir Daniel Lyons, "mounted on the parapet and took off their hats, saluting the Russians. The Russians returned the compliment. To the English gun, as the senior gun, was given the compliment of firing the first shot. It struck the side of the embrasure. Then they fired—a good shot, too. The third shot from Jenny went clean through the Russian embrasure, and up went two gabions. The bluejackets jumped up on their parapet and cheered, thinking they had beaten their opponent. Not a bit! A minute afterward down went the gabions and out came the Russian gun, again. Several more shots were fired from both sides, all very good ones. Jenny got a thump, but it did her no harm. At length, I think after the seventh shot from our side, we saw the Russian gun clean knocked over. Our fellows cheered vociferously, and the Russians mounted the parapet and took off their hats in acknowledgment of their defeat. All the batteries then opened again."

Prince Rupert in Disgrace. A disaster second only to Naseby, and still more unforeseen, soon followed. Fairfax and Cromwell laid siege to Bristol, and after a fierce and daring storm (Sept. 14), Rupert, who had promised the king that he could hold out for four good months, suddenly capitulated, and rode away to Oxford under the humiliating protection of a parliamentary convoy. The fall of this famous stronghold of the west was the severest of all the king's mortifications, as the failure of Rupert's wonted courage was the strangest of military surprises. That Rupert was too clear-sighted not to be thoroughly discouraged by the desperate aspect of the king's affairs is certain, and the military difficulties of sustaining a long siege were thought, even by those who had no reasons to be tender to his fame, to justify the surrender. The king would listen to no excuses, but wrote Rupert an angry letter, declaring so mean an action to be the greatest trial of his constancy that had yet happened, depriving him of his commissions, and bidding him begone beyond the seas. Rupert nevertheless insisted on following the king to Newark, and after some debate was declared to be free of all disloyalty or treason, but not of indignation.—John Morley, in March Century.

Four Rode on an Avalanche. While Messrs. Beeman, O'Brien, Herman and Kirks were working near the summit on the White Pass, Alaska, the snow on which they were standing started. By the time their fright had lifted their hats off they were landed beyond Stone House. They had traveled over 1,000 feet and were only a little bruised by the sudden stop of the avalanche.

WHITTILING FOR FUN.

People who flock southward during the winter as a relief from the cares at home take on some new and strange occupations. At present the passion is for whittling, says the Washington Post. In fact, it is the amusement of the hour of the banker, the merchant and the tired-out millionaire. But it is not the same aimless chipping away of a stick that delights the schoolboy; very pretty things are made by these grave designers, paper cutters being one of the most general. After a number of men congregated at some resort have been attacked by the craze, it is amusing to see them starting out to find the wood. They go forth clad in knickerbockers and armed with great jack-knives, as serious as though in search of the buck of the season. More prized than any other are the woods of the laurel and rhododendron. Both are exquisitely white and receive as high and fine a polish as satin. Straight pieces of considerable length are chosen to be cut and it is desirable that they should terminate in a fork. The forked part is left undisturbed in its natural state for the handle, while the other end is whittled down into the blade of the cutter. Various are the ways of achieving this apparently simple end and every man finds contentment in the conviction that his own knife and tools are the best. The final polishing is universally done with sandpaper and a broken bit of glass. Knitting needles are also popular among the things that are being whittled. They are finished at the top with a round ball, which has carved upon it the initials of the one who is to be their possessor. The greatest achievement in whittling, however, is an endless chain that was recently done by quite an old gentleman who had gone to the south to rest. Wilton each link rested a little revolving ball. It was truly a chef d'oeuvre. Scientifically it is claimed that there is something about the mechanical calm of whittling which is most restful to an overtaxed mind.

Easy Enough. "Johnnie, how would you divide thirteen apples among fourteen boys?" "Make 'em into apple sauce, sir!"

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The earnings of one German line between Hamburg and New York in 1899 exceeded the earnings of the previous year by 4,000,000 marks.

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Seven counties in Western New York received nearly \$5,000,000 for their apple crop last year.

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